



School Emergency/Crisis Response A Call To Action

**U.S. Department of Education
2006 Emergency Response and
Crisis Management Grantees Training
Atlanta, Georgia
School Emergency/Crisis Tabletop Exercise
*Are you ready?***

**presented by
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Rockville, Maryland**



Written Exercise

Tabletop Objectives

- **To test the school's ability to respond to and mitigate an emergency/crisis by activating the school emergency/crisis plan utilizing the foundation of the Incident Command System (ICS) under the structure of a working crisis team**
- **To develop appropriate strategies and responses in mitigating and resolving the emergency/crisis**
- **To test the readiness, capabilities, and effectiveness of the school/school system emergency/crisis plan and crisis team**
- **To build a level of cohesiveness of the crisis team in working together to respond to the emergency/crisis**
- **To evaluate the school's response to the emergency/crisis**

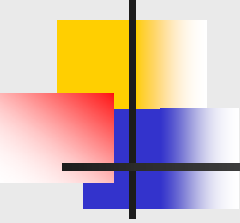


Tabletop Instructions

- Each team is to designate a principal as the incident commander (or an assistant principal if no principal is available)
- The incident commander will be responsible for leading the crisis team in responding to the emergency/crisis by--
 - Making critical assignments (all members of the team should play a role in the scenario response)
 - Developing response strategies
 - Conducting team updates and reporting out
 - Conducting exercise debriefing to assess, evaluate, and discuss lessons-learned
- Team members must maintain a written activity log to record the names of people they would have contacted, requests, actions taken, and the status of those actions.

The Scenario Timeline

Part 1

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- Facilitator will read the initial scenario.
 - Your team will be given time to develop and explain a list of steps/actions taken to manage the emergency/crisis.
 - Selected incident commanders will report out to the entire group.

The Scenario Timeline

Part 2

- Your team will be given scenario interjects at various intervals.
- Your team should continue to work during each interject.
- Selected incident commanders will report out to the entire group.



Scenario Incident Facts

- Buckhead Middle School is a suburban middle school with 719 students and 79 staff members.
- Buckhead Middle School is a one and one-half level building with 116,300 square feet.
- School starts at 7:50 a.m. and dismisses at 2:40 p.m.
- All students ride the school system-owned and operated school buses unless parents drop them off.



Scenario Incident Facts

(continued)

- Buckhead Middle School has an on-site emergency team (OSET).
- School buses initially pick up high school students followed by middle school students and then elementary school students.
 - High school begins at 7:10 a.m., middle school at 7:50 a.m., and elementary school at 8:20 a.m.

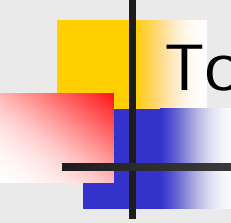


Scenario Incident Facts

(continued)

- Sherwood High School is the feeder high school to Buckhead Middle School and is located three miles from Buckhead.
- The school system is a comprehensive district that provides direct support services to all schools as opposed to contracting out for services.
- All schools report to the Office of School Performance (OSP) located at central office for school related issues or needs, and each school has an assigned community superintendent for these purposes.

Scenario Incident



Today, at approximately 8:00 a.m., a school system employee from the food service division was making a delivery of food supplies to Buckhead Middle School. As the driver was backing the delivery vehicle up to the cafeteria loading dock, he unknowingly struck an exposed valve to a 1,000 gallon propane tank that is buried beneath the ground. The propane tank supplies propane to all of the school's science labs and was filled to capacity. As a result of the valve being struck, the cap was severed and propane immediately began to leak from the tank. The propane tank is located next to the cafeteria near the school's air intake system. The fumes from the leak immediately began to penetrate the school building through the cafeteria as the doors were open in anticipation of the delivery. The fumes also were being emitted via the air intake system.



Scenario Incident

(continued)

The cafeteria manager immediately notified the school principal of the incident. After realizing what happened, the driver pulled the delivery vehicle a few feet forward from the severed valve, left the vehicle ignition running, and entered the school to report the incident to his supervisor. A physical education class with 30 students and one teacher has just started outside in the athletic field area behind the cafeteria. There are approximately 15 students and one teacher at the time of the incident who are in the cafeteria discussing an upcoming extracurricular event. At the time of the incident, the outside temperature is approximately 25 degrees with clear skies and moderate winds blowing approximately 10-15 miles per hour in the direction of the cafeteria.



Group Table Work

- Select the school incident commander
- Work as a team to identify incident response strategies, assignments made, what steps, decisions, and actions would you take to respond to the incident and why?
- Identify what assistance you may need from the Office of School Performance.
- Be prepared to report out to the at-large group.



Interject #1

The Office of School Performance (OSP) at approximately 8:20 a.m. contacts the principal and advises that the community superintendent and representatives from the Department of School Safety and Security (DSSS) are enroute to provide assistance. The DSSS also notified the school principal of the properties of propane which include gases that are extremely flammable and easily ignited by heat, sparks, or flames. Vapors from liquefied gases are initially heavier than air and spread along the ground. Vapors may cause dizziness or asphyxiation without warning. Some vapors may be irritating if inhaled at high concentrations. The Office of the Superintendent and OSP are starting to get calls from parents about the incident. Several local media outlets are also making inquires about the incident.

Group Work



Continue to respond as a team to the emergency/crisis based on the existing and new conditions.

Selected teams will give a brief report to the entire group.



Interject #2

At approximately 8:40 a.m., the Department of School Safety and Security was notified by a firefighter supervisor on the scene that there was a significant presence of fire and rescue personnel to include a HazMat unit and several police officers at the school. The supervisor also advised that the responders are having difficulty securing the propane leak, and there are two media helicopters hovering over the area. This information was relayed to the school principal via cell phone.



Group Work

Continue to respond as a team to the emergency/crisis based on the existing and new conditions

Selected teams will give a brief report to the entire group.



Interject #3

- At approximately 9:00 a.m., the Department of School Safety and Security was again notified by a firefighter supervisor on the scene that an incident perimeter had been established and the incident will take several hours to resolve. School system maintenance staff and staff from the propane refueling company are at the school providing assistance in an effort to properly secure the propane tank leak. It is estimated that it will be at least one and one-half hours before the leak may be contained. This information was conveyed to the principal via cell phone.



Group Work

Continue to respond as a team to the emergency/crisis based on the existing and new conditions

Selected teams will give a brief report to the entire group.

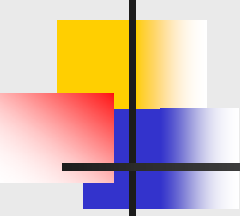


Scenario Response

- Assess the situation--analyze safety risks.
- Ensure 911/Fire and Rescue communications notified with all known information.
- Make an immediate decision to evacuate the building based on threat of explosion and health risks.
- Evacuation notice to students and staff.
 - made via PA system to evacuate?
 - Made by pulling fire alarm?
 - Evacuate to multi-hazard site at least 300 feet from school in an upwind location.
 - Ensure outside PE class notified of the incident and evacuated to safe area.

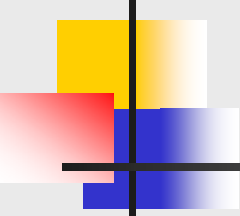
Scenario Response

(continued)

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- **Student and staff accountability**
 - outside communication (two-way radios, etc.)
 - verify student/staff presence and report any discrepancies
 - **Notify Office of School Performance (central office) of incident and initial response.**
 - **Establish an outside incident command post.**
 - **Crisis team/OSET members and other available staff gather at the command post.**
 - **Communicate with the SRO phone/radio.**

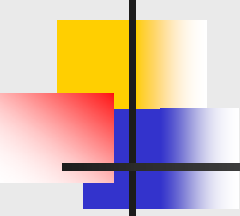
Scenario Response

(continued)

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- **Key Crisis Team/OSET assignments**
 - **Tracking coordinator.**
 - **Bring the emergency kit/additional two-way radios.**
 - **Assist with special needs students/staff.**
 - **Identify students/staff exposed to propane fumes and assess medical concerns. Health concerns must be addressed immediately and comprehensively.**
 - **Identify media liaison/media staging area.**
 - **Establish and staff parent/child relocation area at school.**

Scenario Response

(continued)

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- **Incident commander/principal needs to recognize they will be operating under unified command**
 - Identify school public safety liaison assigned to unified command post
 - Coordinate any media statements/releases
 - **Critical decisions by incident commander/principal**
 - Remember critical roles should be delegated during your response
 - Keep students and staff informed of response with updates
 - Evacuation to off-site location-Sherwood High School
 - Request OSP assistance in obtaining school bus transportation



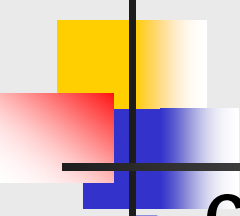
Scenario Response

(continued)

- **Coordinate evacuation with Sherwood administration**
 - **Student/staff accountability**
 - **Continue to monitor medical/mental health needs**
 - **Reconvene the Crisis Team/OSET**
- **Parent notification of incident/evacuation with updates**
- **Keep OSP updated and coordinate school system assistance**
- **Coordinate parent/child reunification with Sherwood staff**
- **Discuss school closing with community superintendent**

Scenario Response

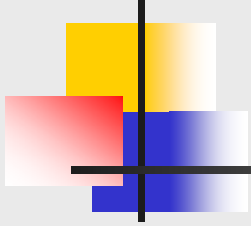
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- Continue to notify parents, and non-school based staff of any changes in the status of the emergency/crisis
 - Continue to update and maintain accurate records
 - Ensure all health hazards and maintenance concerns are addressed prior to reentering the middle school
 - Obtain clearance from public safety officials to return and reenter the school
 - Ensure parent notification letter sent home
 - Coordinate and conduct comprehensive incident debriefing
 - Ensure after-action report is completed



Closing Remarks

- **Summary**
- **Wrap-up points**



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